

Message Text

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SUBJ: SENATOR KENNEDY'S TALK WITH KING HUSSEIN

1. SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY, ACCCOMPANIED BY HIS SISTER, MRS JEAN SMITH, AND STAFF MEMBER ROBERT HUNTER, MET WITH KING HUSSEIN FOR FORTY-FIVE MINUTES THIS MORNING. CONVERSATION COVERED MUCH GROUND ALREADY FAMILIAR TO DEPARTMENT. BELOW ARE AREAS IN WHICH NEW THOUGHTS OR IDEAS EMERGED.

2. EGYPT: KING CENTERED HIS DISCUSSION ABOUT RABAT SUMMIT AND FUTURE IN THE AREA. NOTED THAT EGYPT HAD BEEN PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT AT RABAT -- NOT PROVIDING TO JORDAN HELP WHICH THEY THOUGHT THEY HAD BEEN RPOMISED. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE THOUGHT THAT SADAT HAD CREATED A BOX FOR HIMSELF AND HE WAS NOW IN IT. NOW HE WOULD HAVE NO REAL COMPANY IN FUTURE NEGOTIATION EFFORTS. IN ADDITION, SLOWING DOWN THE MOMENTUM HAD RAISED SERIOUSLY THE DANGER OF RENEWED WAR. KING BELIEVES SADAS IS NOT IN POSITION TO JOIN SYRIA IF WAR BREAKS OUT AGAIN BECAUSE HE DOES NOT HAVE THE EQUIPMENT AND SPARE PARTS TO DO SO AND HAS ALREADY MADE IT CLEAR TO OTHER ARAB LEADERS THAT HE WOULD NOT JLIN IN A WAR, IN SPITE OF GENERALLY MORE FUZZY EGYPTIAN PUBLIC STATEMENTS. KING SAID SADAT NOW HAS, IN EVENTUALITY OF WAR, ONLY THREE ALTERNATIVES: (A) TO GO BACK TO THE SOVIETS AND SEEK MASSIVE MILITARY SUPPLIES AND THEREBY RISK THE REACQUISITION OF SOVIET DOMINANCE IN EGYPTIAN

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POLICY; (B) TO INCUR THE IRE OF THE OTHER ARAB STATES

BY DRAGGING HIS FEET AND REMAINING OUT OF THE CONFLICT; AND (C) TO RISK AN OVERTHROW BECAUSE OF DOMESTIC INTERNAL INSTABILITY AND ARMY PRESSURE BY DECLARING HIMSELF OUT AT THE BEGINNING. IN EACH CASE SADAT AND DGYPT WOULD LOSE. IT WAS KING'S JUDGEMENT THAT SADAT WAS IN A WEAKENED INTERNAL POSITION AND THEREFORE WAS NOT IN GOOD SHAPE TO FACE ANY OF THE FUTURE ALTERNATIVES. HE CAPPED HIS REMARKS BY STATING THAT HE THOUGHT THE US HAD TOO OFTEN OPERATED AS IF EGYPT WAS THE MOST INFLUENTIAL -- INDEED THE SOLE -- LEADER OF THE ARAB WORLD. HE THOUGHT EGYPT WAS A COUNTRY ON WHICH THE US HAD DEPENDED TOO HEAVILY. THERE WERE OTHER SIGNIFICANT ARAB STATES AND THE US SHOULD BE CAREFUL ABOUT GOING OVERBOARD WITH THE EGYPTIANS.

3. ON WAR: KING SAID HE THOUGHT SITUATION AT PRESENT WAS VERY DANGEROUS. ARAB AMBASSADORS HAD BEEN CALLED IN IN DAMASCUS YESTERDAY AND TOLD THAT ISRAELIS WERE ABOUT TO STRIKE. SYRIANS SAID THEY COULD NOT FACE THE ISRAELIS ALONE, WITHOUT EGYPT AND JORDAN, FOR THEY WERE SURE TO LOSE. KING CONTRASTED THIS POINT WITH FACT THAT SYRIANS HAD ALSO SAID CLEARLY THEY WOULD NOT RENEW THE UNDOF MANDATE WHICH SEEMED TO MAKE WAR INEVITABLE. WHEN PRESSED AS TO WHETHER SYRIA WOULD CHANGE ITS VIEW ON UNDOF, KING SAID THEY TEND TO BE STUBBORN, BUT THEY MIGHT BE SHIFTED. HE WENT ON TO INDICATE THAT HE BELIEVED ASAD WAS UNDER VERY CONSIDERABLE DOMESTIC PRESSURE ON THIS QUESTION.

4. ON THE PLO: THE SENATOR ASKED HIM DIRECTLY WHETHER HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL FOR US TO BEGIN A DIALOGUE OR TALKS WITH THE PLO. THE KING SAID HE WOULD PREFER NOT TO COMMENT ON THAT POINT AS HE DIDN'T REALLY FEEL QUALIFIED. IMPLICATION WAS CLEARLY HE DID NOT WANT TO MAKE DIRECT RECOMMENDATION ON US POLICIES. HOWEVER, WHEN PRESSED BY THE SENATOR FOR AN ANSWER, HE SAID INTER ALIA THAT HE THOUGHT PLO SHOULD BE GIVEN SOME TIME TO SEE WHAT THEY CAN DO WITH THE PROBLEM ON THEIR OWN. WE AND SENATOR KENNEDY BOTH INTERPRET THIS ANSWER (NOT SURPRISINGLY) AS BEING CLEARLY A HOPE THAT WE WILL NOT INTERVENE IN ANY WAY THAT CAN BE PERCEIVED BY PLO AS

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ASSISTING THEIR CAUSE, AT LEAST UNTIL IT CAN BE SEEM WHETHER PLO CAN MOVE TOWARD NEGOTIATIONS ON ITS OWN.
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